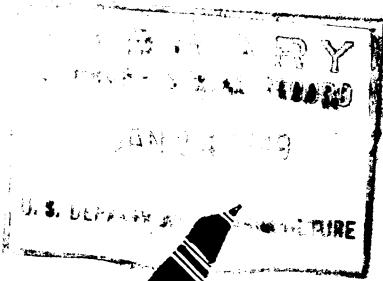
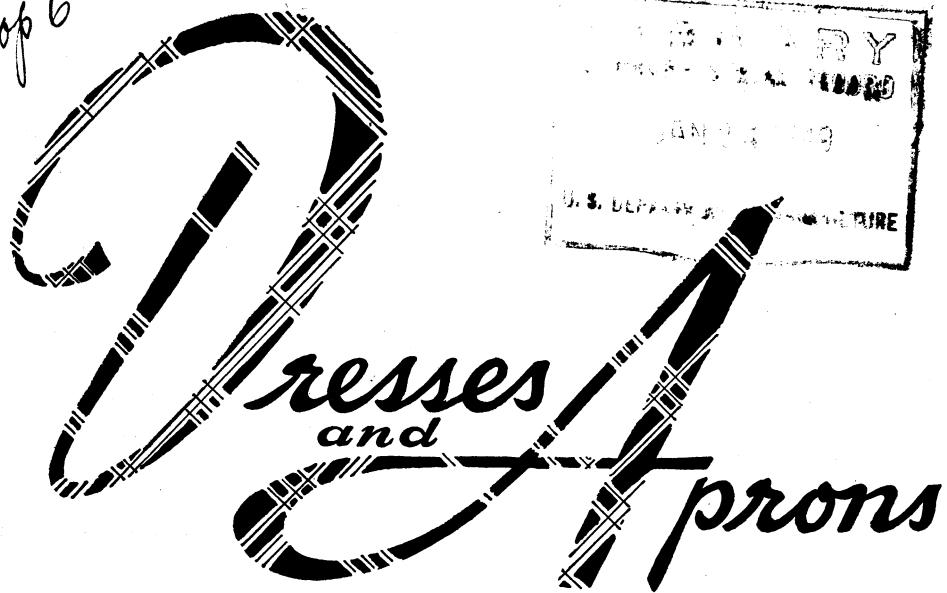


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for work  
in  
the home

FARMERS' BULLETIN NO. 1963

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# DRESSES AND APRONS

## for work in the home

by

CLARICE L. SCOTT, *clothing specialist*  
ELIZABETH BRUZGULIS, *scientific aide*

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If you are a homemaker doing your own work, then, like the rest of the busy world of workers, you want clothing suited to your job. A dress that restricts when you reach or bend, that twists or gets in your way when you stoop or climb may be as fatiguing as a poorly planned kitchen. Yet there are homemakers who give less attention to the selection of their work garments than they do to choosing kettles and pans, often buying a dress or apron merely because it has heart-shaped pockets or perky ruffles. Actually, the beauty of a dress depends not on decoration alone, but first and foremost on basic cut and design features which make it possible for the dress to follow the movements of the body gracefully and harmoniously.

Keeping in mind a homemaker's need for clothes that are comfortable and saving of time and energy, the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics has designed the dresses and aprons shown on the following pages. Commercial companies have reproduced some of these designs in patterns, thus making them available to home sewers.

Each of these designs meets the following tests as a functional garment:

- **Free action and coolness** for comfort.
- **Safety features** for work around the stove, for stooping, for getting up and down on chairs or ladders.
- **Time- and energy-saving features** that make a garment quick and easy to put on—quick and easy to iron. It must have pockets that are useful and are placed where they can be reached without fumbling.

And for the homemaker who sews, the functional dress must be simple to make.

- **Durability** both in material and workmanship.
- **Attractiveness** based on usefulness and comfort.

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**Note.**—Length of dresses shown in this publication may be varied with fashion changes. But in utility garments, both length and width of skirt must always be planned for safety, as well as becomingness to the individual.

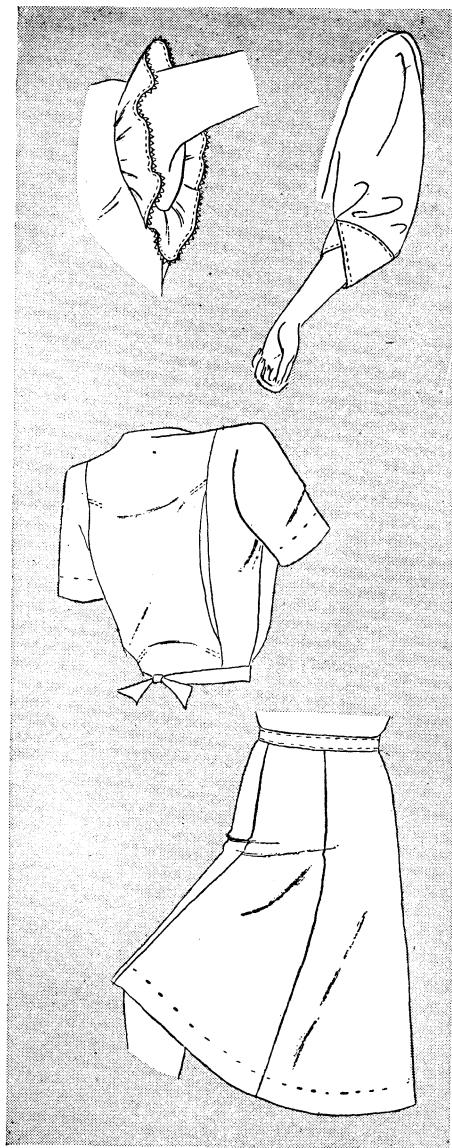
In more detail, here are pointers about skirts, blouse backs, and other parts of a functional garment that can help you when selecting a pattern or ready-to-wear for work around the home. Keep in mind that all parts of a functional dress must work together for the comfort of the wearer. The advantage of one good design feature can be lost if the rest of the dress is poorly planned or doesn't fit. A well-cut sleeve, for example, may be hampered by a back that's too tight, for sleeves and back must move together to give room for action.

**Sleeves** are most comfortable and safe if they're short—above the elbows—and moderately wide. For more freedom and cool comfort, use wings or ruffles instead of sleeves. On chilly mornings when you need extra warmth, wear a work jacket with three-quarter-length sleeves, tapered to fit the lower arm so sleeves won't catch on kitchenware. Later when the house has warmed up, you can shed the jacket and enjoy the comforts of short sleeves.

Then, instead of shoulder pads—since they're warm, slow drying, and a nuisance to launder—use light, washable stiffening.

**Blouse backs** designed for action may have pleats, gathers, or some other feature that provides width, but they're action backs only if fullness is placed where it can respond to arm and shoulder movements.

**Skirts**, moderately wide, but not full are safest for work around a home. A gored skirt may be cut wide enough at the bottom to allow for walking, running, climbing, stooping, and yet be fitted enough about the hips to stay in place. A full skirt like a dirndl may get stepped on when you're going up and down a ladder to wash windows or stooping to low shelves.



**Neck lines** made large enough so you can pull them over your head without strain or fuss save dressing time and wear and tear on the garment. They don't muss the hair, and they're cool.

Flat trimming, flat collars, or flared ruffles are best for neck lines because they can't crowd up against the throat. In general, ruffles or collars are more satisfactory both to iron and to wear if they end at the shoulder seams, leaving the neck line plain in the back.

**Waist bands** fitted easy rather than tight help make a dress cool and allow it to move freely when there is reaching to do. Set-in belts hold skirt and blouse fullness in its proper place and are safe because they're flat. Ties, set in the side or side-front seams, allow you to adjust the waistline at the back as you choose. But they need to be narrow and tie in a flat bow. A wide fluffy bow is likely to catch on things in the kitchen.

**Pockets** placed on the full parts of the garment but not on the rounded parts of the body are easier to use. The right size depends on the purpose they must serve. In general, a pocket must be large enough for your closed hand. Straight and slanting tops are equally handy if a pocket is at the side, where your hand can drop straight down into it. But if a pocket is close to the front, slant the opening toward the back.

**Dress openings** must be long enough so you can get into the dress easily without straining the material or mussing your hair.

**Fastenings** may be as few as will serve to prevent gapping. Keep buttons within hand range so that it's not necessary to bend over or to pull the dress up to button it. Flat, medium-sized buttons with smooth edges are less likely to break or tear buttonholes and are easier for ironing. Be sure fastenings are colorfast, rustproof, and in other ways washable.

**Materials** best for housework are mediumweight cottons that can be worn without a slip. Fabrics with all-over patterns on colored rather than white backgrounds look fresh longer. Whenever possible, get dyes that are fast to washing, sun, and perspiration. Be sure materials are thoroughly preshrunk.

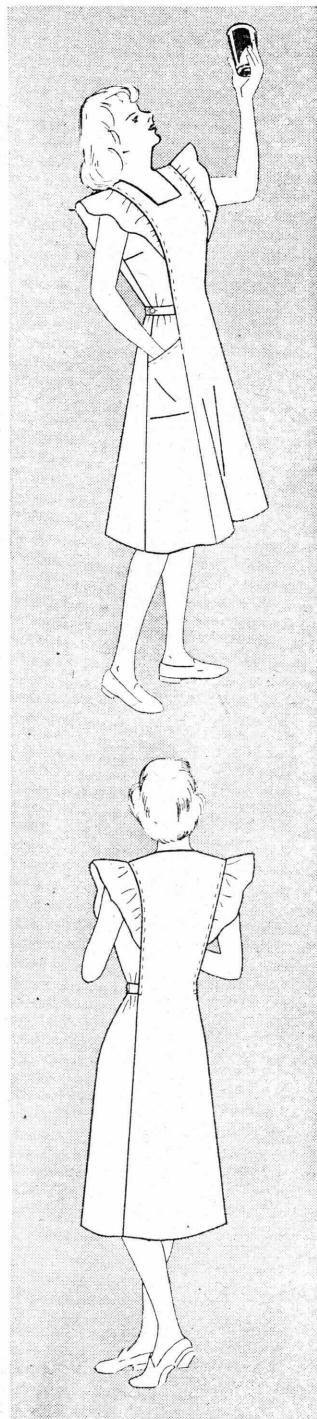
Trimming must be as sturdy as the material so it won't get ragged while the dress is still good. Trim will lie flat and be easier to iron if, like the fabric, it is preshrunk.

**Workmanship** must be neat and sturdy with reinforcements at parts of the dress that get strain—at pocket corners—at places where buttons are sewed on. Buttonholes to be durable must be cut with the grain of the goods and closely worked. Construction, besides being strong, should be flat with no thick lumpy corners that spoil the looks of a garment and make ironing slow.



## Pull-Over Dress

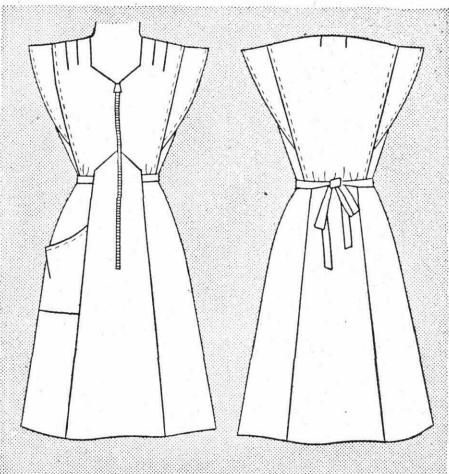
Simple to make, easy to wear, quick to iron—this pull-over dress is fashioned for girls and young homemakers. It is styled with comfortable fullness held in place by narrow straps set in the seams at side front and back, and buttoned to the seams. Wings, double-layered so they won't wilt, take the place of sleeves and give perfect arm freedom. The collarless square neck line makes the dress cool and simplifies sewing and care.



## Zipper Dress

With a zip of the long—but not too long—zipper, this dress permits those hurried changes that busy housewives frequently have to make. Slip the dress on over the head or, if you prefer, step into it. The opening is ample.

This dress is styled with easy fullness. You adjust it to suit your comfort with narrow waist ties set in with the front panel. The bow in the back is small and safely out of the way.



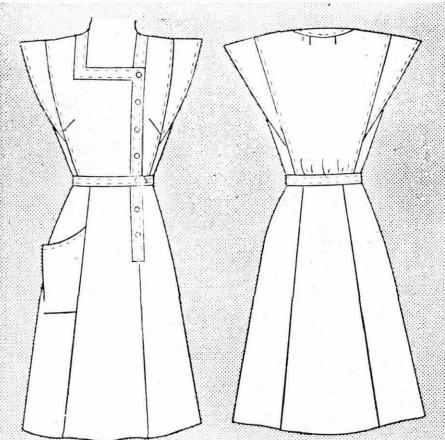
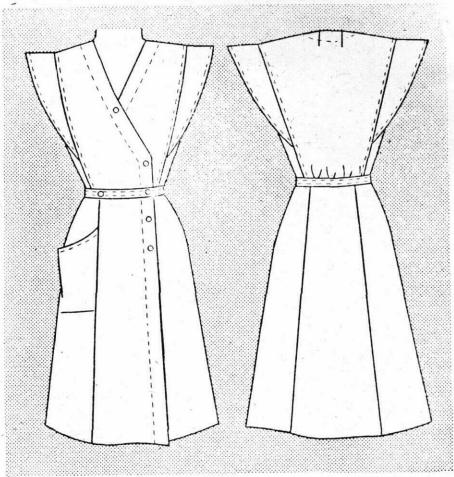
## Wrap-Around Dress

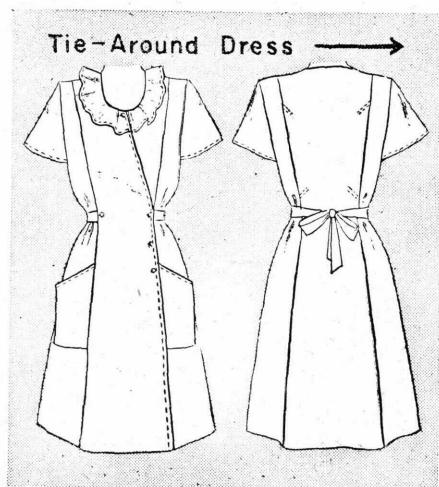
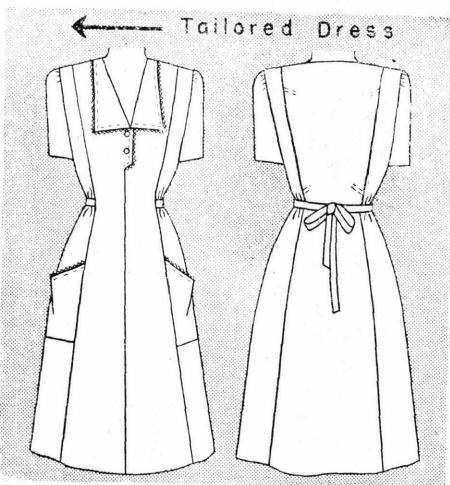
For women who like wrap-arounds here is a surplice style with fastenings placed so there's no groping to find them. Two buttons at the waist and two from the waist to the bend of the hips keep the skirt from blowing open too far, or from falling over into the way of your work. Thus you have all of the conveniences of a wrap-around—but none of the usual skirt hazards and annoyances. An extra convenience is the belt. It is stitched in and can't get lost.



## Side-Closing Dress

A neatly fitted dress with real working comfort for the stout woman. It has the six-gore skirt that all women like because it is becoming and wide enough for both comfort and safety. The blouse is cool and collarless. Wings take the place of ordinary sleeves. Set into side-front and back seams, they provide comfortably for the body's thickness and allow free arm movement. The belt is stitched in so it won't ever get lost.





## Tailored Dress

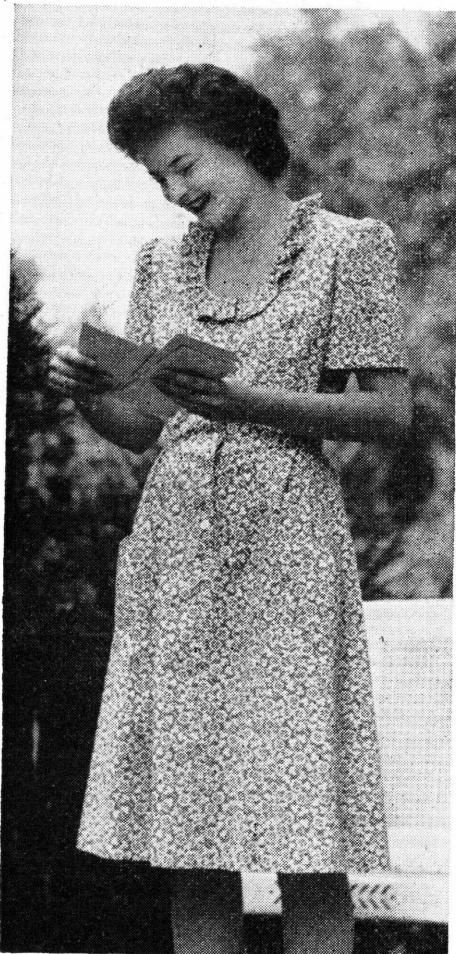
Trim and simply designed, this princess dress never hampers activity whether you are reaching for the topmost dish or stooping to pick a mess of green beans. Pleats set in side-back seams function with the sleeves and give room where it's needed. The collar, at front only, is cut in one with the dress. A plain neck line at the back is cool and less bother than a collar when a wrap is worn.



## Tie-Around Dress

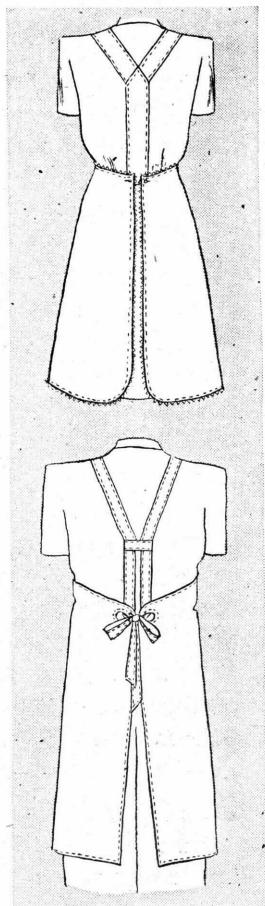
Designed for action, this dress has pleats in the back with plenty of "give" for reaching; a skirt roomy enough for stooping; ties to allow as much ease in adjusting the waist as you desire; and cool, flared sleeves.

Other features: Flared ruffles ending at the shoulders in place of a collar; large pockets; one button at the neck, three from waist to hip to keep the lapped skirt from blowing open.



## U-Neck Dress

Easy to put on, even when days are hot and sticky, this dress has a long front opening so it may be pulled over the head or stepped into, as you choose. All buttons are within hand range, with one at the waist exactly in line with the ties to prevent an ugly gap. The dress has an action back, roomy sleeves, and patch pockets at hand level.



## Skirt Apron

Designed for the woman who wants an apron that covers her skirt and just enough bib to catch the splatters of dishwater. This apron is made in one piece cut crosswise of the goods. The "can't slip" shoulder straps join into a single strip at the back—easy to fasten.

## Man's Apron

An apron adjustable for any-size man—it's straight and without trim, and it protects the clothes. Two long darts—one on each side—give the apron the shape that's needed. Shoulder straps are fitted and sewed to a crosswise bar at center back to prevent sliding. One piece of cloth makes all three pockets—two large ones with slanted openings, as well as a small one.

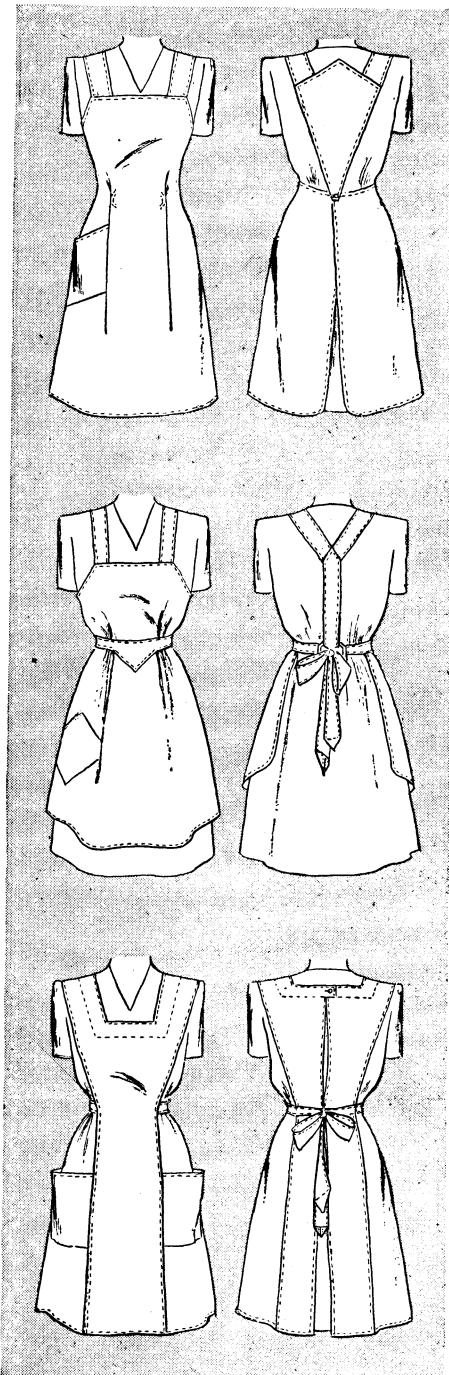
## Adjustable Apron

One apron like this can be adjusted to fit all the women in your household. Simply draw up or let out the cord in the back. Knots in the two ends of the cord keep it from pulling out.

By careful cutting you can make this apron from 1 yard of 36-inch cotton. It is quick and easy to make and has everything in comfort and convenience.







## Square-Bib Apron

This apron is a real coverall, and a three-way time-saver—a "quickie" to make, to put on, and to iron. Cut crosswise of the goods, it has the bib and skirt in one piece. Shoulder straps can be pulled far apart so you needn't rumple your hair when you slip the apron on. The V-shaped waist piece and the skirt fasten over one easy-to-reach button in the back.

## Bias Apron

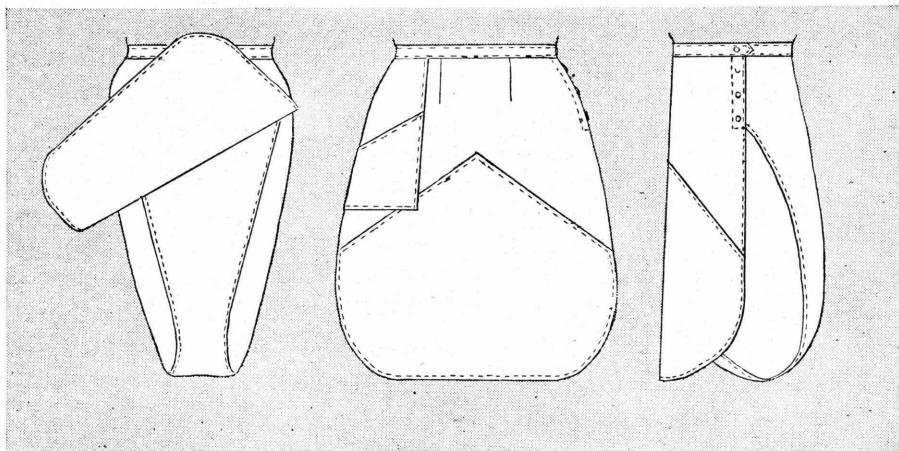
Made of a dainty print or smart plaid, this bias apron is just the thing for church suppers.

One square yard of goods makes the apron body, and an extra half-yard goes for pocket, straps, and band.

Gathers to nip in the waist and a band with ties, applied over the gathers, give shape. A single band holds shoulder straps together in the back so they can't slide. The sash runs through two loops and ties at center back.

## Pinafore

Streamlined for the woman who hasn't time to iron ruffles, this pinafore is pretty as well as practical. It opens down the back with only two fastenings—a button at the neck and a tie at the waist. This does away with the usual row of buttons that scratch furniture and are awkward to fasten. Ample pockets in the gathered parts of the skirt are particularly easy to use.



## Mop Apron

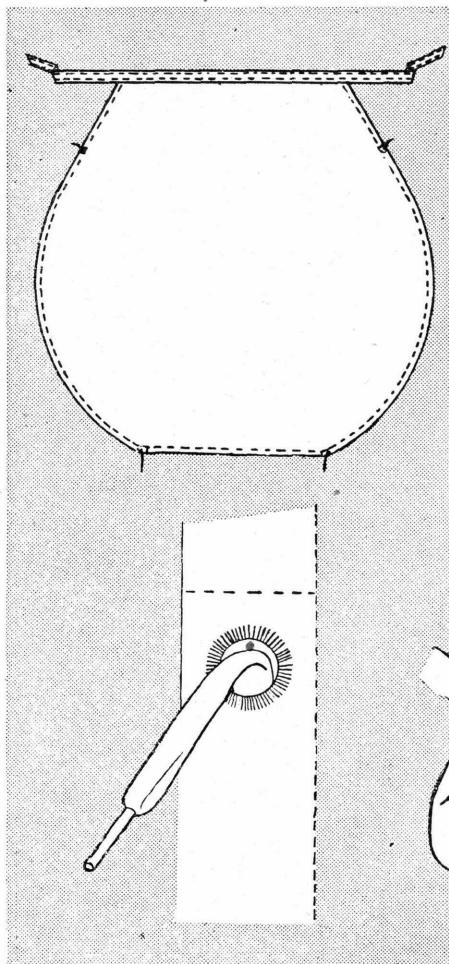
Here's a one-job apron. It's a step-into apron for cleaning days. It holds your skirt up—out of mop water, and keeps you from catching your skirt on your heels. The pocket hangs free from the belt—a convenience when you stoop at work.

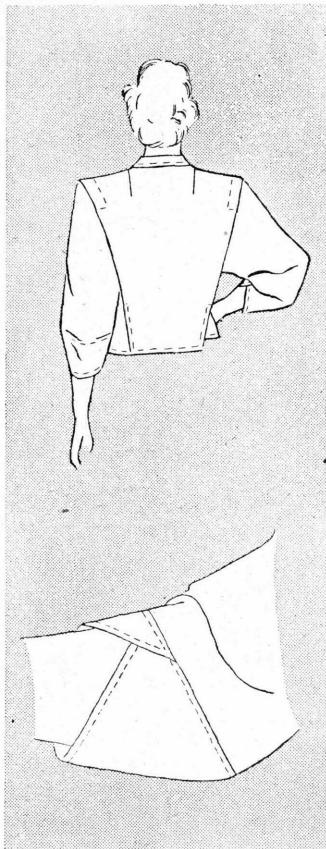
No need to buy new material to make this apron. If you have a man's discarded shirt, use it; you can make the apron with a little piecing.



## Basket Apron

Designed for double duty, this may be a serviceable round-the-house apron or—pull the drawstrings and you have a basket for carrying in roasting ears, freshly laid eggs, or a mess of peas. Make it of sturdy cotton and use strong drawstrings that slip easily through the edge casings. Shoestrings are excellent for this purpose.





## Kitchen Jacket

Safety features high-light this washable jacket designed to keep the chill off while your kitchen warms up, or you run little errands in and out of doors. The back of the jacket has an action pleat next to the sleeves. Also, sleeves are three-quarter length—safely up and out of the way of dishwater, pan handles, and fire. These sleeves are cut to provide comfortable elbowroom, and the surplice cuffs spread as you work to fit the lower arm.

Make this jacket of material unnapped on the outside or treated for fire resistance. No need for a lining unless you want extra warmth. Then, soft outing flannel may be quilted to the inside of the jacket.

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